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ABSTRACT

Certain principles, assumptions, and caveats are considered in this conference paper that are relevant to the formal evaluation of academic administrators. Academic administration is defined as "leadership and managerial activity associated with teaching, research, educational services such as counseling or placement, and extension activities including continuing education." The rationale for administrator evaluation is examined along with types of evaluation, the authority for evaluation, uses of the evaluation, and the need for a formal system. A model set forth in the author's previously published monograph, "The Evaluation of Academic Administrators: Principles, Process, and Outcomes," is described along with three alternative models. The three alternative models include: (1) the Ad Hoc Evaluation Committee Model in the State University of New York; (2) a Civil Service Review Model used by the California State Colleges and Universities System; and (3) a Management Scorecard Model proposed by Peter Drucker. (LBH)

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THE EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATORS

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper is largely drawn from the experience I had in preparing a monograph, *The Evaluation of Academic Administrators: Principles, Processes, and Outcomes*, for the Council of Presidents of the Pennsylvania State Colleges and University, and the President and Provost of The Pennsylvania State University in 1975.

The monograph sets forth a model for academic administrator evaluation. This model will be described at a later point in this paper. Three alternative models will also be briefly described. A brief statement will also be made regarding the experience of the State University of New York in using a model quite similar to the model I proposed for Pennsylvania. However, the first section of this paper will set forth certain principles, assumptions, and caveats that I believe relevant as any person or group moves toward a *formal* evaluation of academic administrators.

Rationale for Administrator Evaluation

In the last half century the rather fantastic growth of American business, governmental, and educational institutions has caused the scholars of the universities to begin to study these institutions in a systematic way. Organizations are being studied in terms of such aspects as productivity, efficiency, social utility, worthiness, and accountability.

Colleges and universities have not been spared the scrutiny being given to other organizations. The larger society has come to realize, that colleges and universities are exceedingly important to the nation's

well-being and that they are expensive. As organizations they are pervasive, numbering nearly three thousand, and are found in almost every community of any size. They enroll more than ten million students annually and employing perhaps 750,000 faculty. Colleges and universities are the chief knowledge producers of the nation, doing basic research and making applications of knowledge to matters of agricultural and industrial production, health and public welfare, our legal and judicial systems, our systems of education and government, the defense of the nation--indeed to all activity relevant to the nation's general welfare. They cost approximately 35 billion dollars annually to operate. It is not always perceived by those in or out of colleges and universities that they are exceedingly complicated institutions; their management is also a complex task.

Managers must be employed. Logic would dictate that after employment, managers should be evaluated. Of course, they are, but largely informally. However, as organizations and their management are being studied systematically, the informal processes of employment and evaluation are becoming formalized. Again, it is so with colleges and universities. Trustees and governments are becoming insistent regarding formal evaluation.

Colleges and universities are members of a limited class of institutions whose work force has a high proportion of professionals known as the faculty. Faculties play a significant role in policy formation and policy administration in higher education, and they demand of college and university administrators a consideration and an accountability significantly different from that required by employees or

managers in most production and service organizations. *Faculties are asking for more formal appraisal of college and university administrators.*

Finally, students in colleges and universities have a status related to the organization that appears to be unique. Students have on the one hand a special obligation to colleges and universities; on the other hand, they expect certain considerations from the college or university as a matter of right as persons and as students. Hence, *students also ask that college and university administrations be accountable and that they be subjected to formal evaluation as administrators.*

A Definition: Academic administration is *leadership and managerial activity associated with teaching, research, educational services such as counseling or placement, and extension activities including continuing education.*

Types of Evaluation

Evaluation involves value judgments. These judgments are often made in relationship to norms or standards. Phrases such as "better than," "as good as," or "worse than" imply a judgment made in relation to a norm. These judgments may be qualitative as just illustrated, or they may be quantified as, for example, in the use of an intelligence quotient or a percentile rank.

Comparisons may be made against a previous state or a previous performance, e.g., "College B has increased its endownment from M dollars per full-time equivalent student to Y dollars per full-time equivalent student." A college may report that its admissions applications increased from M thousands to Y thousands between two given years.

A third type of evaluation is simply a judgment rendered with available data at hand and in "professional terms," i.e., in terms of the judgment of a trained and experienced person or persons. The situation in which this kind of evaluation occurs usually has several characteristics. The criteria used in the evaluation are normally multiple and complex. The person or organization being evaluated is responding to a situation that is in many respects unique--the evaluation is made in terms of a specific situation, under a specific set of circumstances, and at a specific point in time. Such is the character of evaluations that are involved in accreditation of colleges and universities either as a whole (regional) or in terms of specific programs, e.g., a specific school such as medicine or a program in journalism.

II. ASSUMPTIONS AND RELATED ASPECTS BASIC TO ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATION

A basic assumption is that the formal process of evaluation must meet pragmatic tests of "seeming to be more valid and more reliable" than informal processes. It cannot be assumed that formal evaluations are necessarily so.

A second assumption is that the person evaluated should have opportunity to review the process and conclusions of the evaluation with the person or group that makes the semi-final and final definitive judgments concerning the evaluation. There should also be an opportunity to appeal.

A third assumption is that the nature of the review process generally shall be known, but that its results concerning any given individual are to remain confidential. The only exception to this practice shall be in

those cases where unanimous agreement to waive the observance of confidentiality is reached by all parties involved in the process.

Who Evaluates and Why

A Definition: *Evaluation is a process of review to assess the performance of academic administrators and to make a value judgment concerning this assessment.* It is here assumed to be a formal process different from the informal activity continuously engaged in by many in universities and colleges and by almost all persons who have any interest in a given institution.

Legally and technically the authority for evaluation lies with the governing board of any given college or university. Normally, the evaluation of the chief administrator of an organization--in this discussion a college or university president--is carried out directly under the authority and control of the board, while evaluation of academic administrators other than the president is delegated to the president. It is to be assumed that input, advice, counsel, and such will be given by a variety of "others" in colleges and universities regarding both presidential and other academic administrator evaluations.

Uses of the Evaluation

The final and definitive use to which an official and formal evaluation points is continuance in office, removal from office, or advice and counsel concerning future services and tenure. But it is to be assumed that normal and systematic evaluations at regular or otherwise specified times will not generally be harshly concerned with a definitive decision to remove from office. Indeed, it seems that

the removal of a president is characteristically related to an idiosyncratic situation such as unanticipated and climactic "occurrences" often following a breach of trust, a serious legal offense, insubordination, or a blatant failure of integrity.

It is assumed, then, that formal evaluations made periodically will fall into place as part of the continuing activity to improve institutional processes and decision making. The evaluation should be expected to serve the person being evaluated and to serve the college or university without being unduly threatening to either.

The evaluation should be of use to governing boards and in some respects to the institutional constituencies. The board will better understand the college or university president and other administrators. The board should also better understand the situation, with its demands and constraints, in which the president works. These understandings of other administrators in the institution should also be enhanced for the board and for the president.

Finally, as they understand that administrators are being evaluated, all constituencies should have increased confidence in the well-being of the college or university--to put the situation in homely language, the trustees and president will be perceived as truly tending the store.

A Summary Statement: In the end, an evaluation is an accountability document and should be so viewed. It should be looked upon as part of the system by which a college or university maintains itself.

Need for a Formal Evaluation System

It should be noted again that every college and university will reveal an informal evaluation system at work. Presidents, vice presidents, deans and others will be continuously subject to conversations by their peers, the faculty, and the students. Such activity is the sign of an open institution and is normal organizational behavior, in no way pathological. Administrators will, if they are astute, know how to handle--i.e., evaluate--and use the messages they are receiving through the informal system. There is much to be said that is favorable to an informal system.

But it also has its limitations. As colleges and universities become the complex institutions that they are the informal system is often proving insufficient. It is now apparent as a general consensus that colleges and universities increasingly will be required to be formally responsive in assessments of its operations. Fiscal operations are routinely assessed by auditors, some institutionally selected and others representative of state and federal governments. The federal government and other official bodies are now routinely reviewing employment practices of colleges and universities, and particularly in relation to employment of and salaries paid to women and minority groups. Such assessments more and more often will include formal assessments of administrative personnel.

Caveats Regarding the Formal System

It is appropriate, then, to review briefly some expectations and some caveats regarding a formal system of administrator evaluation. These include the following.

1. The formal system will complement an informal evaluation system. It will not--it cannot--replace the normal day-to-day judgments, praise, scoldings, and questioning that administrators experience. The formal system should add to the informal system, stabilize the total process, and, as is sometimes necessary, bring about judgments that require official notice and action.
2. While the strengths of a formal system can be noted, the limitations should be recognized. Even in the name of accountability or of democratic governance, institutions cannot be responding to the whims of the disgruntled; the vagaries of shifting styles and values; or the variety of claims and counter claims made by religious, civic, social, or patriotic groups that require administrative attention. Colleges and universities inherently have great stability. Evaluation should be a stabilizing process, not a disrupting one.
3. All constituencies, particularly the faculty, trustees, alumni, and supporting agencies of government, need to have clear understanding of the process and potential of administrator evaluation. Without such understanding, unattainable expectations will often be expressed or the process may be deemed a boondoggle, a whitewash, a "con or snow job."
4. All who participate in evaluation need to have an enlightened sense of responsibility; they should be persons of wisdom and judgment, sensitive to human feelings, and conscience.

5. While it will be known that processes of administrator evaluation exist and their natures should be understood, confidentiality dare not be abridged. Authority must be delegated and accepted with full faith and trust if administrator evaluation is to succeed. General findings will be known, but intimacies should not be fully shared.

III. THE FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR EVALUATION

Specific in Time and Place. Evaluation must be conducted in terms of a specific frame of reference. The evaluation should be specific in time and place as well as in the role of the one evaluated.

The constraints of time and space must be considered with care because the situational character of an institution may at one time be critical while at another time a president may create the situation that makes him successful. In any event, when making a judgment concerning an administrator, the freedom and the constraints the situation presents must be at least implicitly reviewed.

Expectations of the Administrator and Institution at Time of Appointment. During the evaluation process, the evaluators must learn what the employer and the employed, e.g., the trustees and the president, deemed the college or university mission to be at the time of appointment. It should be determined if mission and role were mutually understood or were ambiguous.[1] This is a necessary condition in evaluating whether or

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[1] Guidelines for conditions of employment for college and university professors have recently been issued by The American Association of State Colleges and Universities. This report states: "It is important that the conditions under *which college and university presidents serve be known and understood particularly by the presidents and governing boards.*" (Italics ours.)

not the administrator has total responsibility for the organization. Unfortunately, the situation is too often ambiguous or one party or the other has misunderstood. This type of situation has to be handled in the evaluation.

Specific Issues at Time Administrator Hired. Such a statement of mission and role requirements may be complemented by one stating specific issues or situations that existed as an administrator "came on board" and to which he/she was charged to give explicit attention.

Finally, as a preview to evaluation, it should become clear to the evaluators who the primary and secondary constituencies are that administrators need to relate to. These constituencies help define the freedoms and constraints under which administrators operate.

Locus of Authority for Evaluations

The authority to conduct administrator evaluations needs to be clear to all concerned. When a board of trustees holds all the corporate power of a college or university, it has final authority for administrator evaluation. However, authority may be delegated.

The evaluation of vice presidents, deans, provosts, directors, and others with comparable titles should be the responsibility of the president or of a college or university officer delegated to accept the responsibility. However, final and definitive judgment regarding the evaluation should be the president's.

IV. CONDUCTING THE EVALUATION: CONDITIONS AND CRITERIA

We have not yet discussed criteria that evaluators should or can be aware of--criteria that illuminate an area of administrative responsibility;

that provide indicators of performance; that help to define, describe or measure performance. We know that criteria signifying failure or success in administration are imperfectly expressed, are not amenable to universal agreement as to their utility, nor do they lend themselves to measurement and quantification on any of the ways that will win acceptance or generally please the many students of measurement and quantification of human characteristics or behavior.

On the other hand, those who work in or study the academic world do have a considerable experience; they have set forth many elements relevant to judgments of success or failure in administrative roles, and they have an empirical wisdom. It is in this sense of experience, of pragmatic considerations, of the wisdom and insight that win the approval of those who are experienced and who have an intuitive sense of the rightness or wrongness of administrative acts, that we do move now to the discussion of criteria and the frame of reference out of which judgments can be made.

Complex Role and Environment of Educational Administrator Functioning

The competencies that a president must demonstrate over time are multifaceted, overlapping, and often contradictory. To say that a president must on occasion be bold is a valid statement. To say that a president must on occasion be cautious is also valid. The consequence is that there is no way to identify a few qualities, characteristics, habit patterns, competencies, or performances that will permit a valid evaluation. It is reasonable to suggest that all academic administrators requires a complex of talents or attributes. Likewise, the situation in which other academic administrators operate is, in almost all instances, an environment of complexity rather than simplicity.

Finally, the college or university is an organization that, if it is not unique, is representative of a very small class that is not to be perceived, or judged, or managed in terms of conditions normally operating in the worlds of business and industry. We will make no attempt here to be definitive about the nature of colleges and universities as organizations, but we will be suggestive and thus hope to indicate the varieties of talents academic administrators seem to need.

Faculties of the nation's colleges and universities enjoy freedoms known to few others in our society, i.e., they are autonomous professionals. They claim and receive a considerable participation in the governance (management) of colleges and universities. Few other organizations have such a complex management system in which the workers have a high degree of self-governance and policy control.

Finally, colleges and universities operate in the public interest in a very special way. They provide the nation talented human resources, they are the chief knowledge producers, and they are one of but a few institutions that serve as the nation's conscience and the nation's critic. In these terms, colleges and universities are accountable in ways that are faced by only a few other institutions with similar roles.

This statement should be enough to establish the uniqueness of the college or university administrative task.

Some Dicta and Caveats

Certain assumptions or presuppositions seem to be called for and accepted as given as we strive to produce an effective evaluation system. These items would seem to be relevant.

1. An appraisal system must never fail of dignity and confidentiality.
2. The nature of the human condition--that all of us are flawed--should be understood by all. Perfection as an ideal may be entertained; but it is best for those involved in evaluation, particularly those who evaluate the evaluation and deal directly with the evaluated administrator, to understand human limitation--that all of us err, that understanding of potential human response is essential, and that all evaluation inherently involves criticism.
3. A person evaluated has a "right to know" how he/she was evaluated, criteria involved, and how he/she rated.
4. Evaluation involves so many variables and so many that are qualitative, subtle, and complex that an *evaluation* does not produce a simple document; a checklist of modest length; or a score, ratio, quotient, or other quantified, simplistic measure.

Further Caveats

Evaluations or assessments are multifaceted. In some areas, the securing of relevant data is not difficult; in other areas it is almost impossible. In the academic world production criteria are almost impossible to evaluate on a short-run schedule. On occasion, "one flaw" may outweigh a preponderance of favorable evaluations. On other occasions, one great strength may more than compensate for unfavorable evaluations elsewhere.

Recognition of a second condition is fundamental. The same qualities or assessments may be nearly ideal in one time or place and quite inappropriate in another time or place. Valid evaluations can only be such as they are related to specific tasks at specific times, in a specific place.

While the statements just made may seem to be truisms, they are often overlooked in evaluating evaluations.

Criteria for Evaluation

Let us now record a list of criteria that would seem valid to use in judging academic administrators and that would seem to be relatively inclusive or complete. Following the listing, an interpretation of each will be made, its significance in the total evaluation process will be noted, and certain caveats in the use of the criteria will be stated. The classes of criteria are as follows:

1. Criteria related to education and training
2. Criteria related to experience
3. Criteria related to organizational production
4. Criteria related to organizational efficiency
5. Criteria related to performance as an academic leader
6. Criteria related to performance as an academic manager
7. Criteria related to personality, health, energy, personal values, and administrative style
8. Criteria of educational statesmanship
9. Criteria related to astuteness and sophistication in such affairs as are political, economic, social, and involving interactions with persons on and off campus

10. Criteria that would seem to be related to institutional uniqueness or special institutional attributes
11. Criteria, if satisfied, that counterbalance weaknesses elsewhere
12. Criteria that, if not satisfied, guarantee failure

Unique Criteria

It has been noted in Burton Clark's *The Distinctive College* that on occasion a president will have a special quality and a special vision that force circumstances to conform to his/her will and thus he/she dominates an institution. Such a person, as president, may be evaluated in terms we have just outlined, but such an evaluation is in a sense irrelevant because of the overriding power of a president to seem to make the institution his/her own. The word "charisma" has been used to describe or define such persons. Charisma denotes and connotes powers beyond the norm and powers that define the evaluation without reference to norms.

It also must be recognized that certain characteristics may be fatal to success and demand an unfavorable evaluation despite other qualities highly esteemed. Such characteristics, if successfully concealed, may not be influential but, if known, make tenure hazardous or impossible. They are normally flaws of character--moral lapses or failure in financial integrity--but they may also be perceived as complete ineptness in, for example, a managerial role, misplaced trust in others, or an incapacity to delegate to others until a situation assumes pathological characteristics. An evaluation committee should be sensitive to the occasions when the administrator possesses a "fatal flaw."

The Criteria Situation--A Summing Up

We frequently have inferred that each evaluation is a unique event. It is thus to be acknowledged that each evaluation should be based on criteria relative to that evaluation.

It constantly should be noted that evaluations almost always involve qualitative judgments. Evaluation committees should not be fearful in making or recording such judgments.

When considering the varieties of criteria, one should recognize that performance criteria carry a special power. Other criteria should not be downgraded; yet the old saying, "Judge me by what I do, not what I say," has to be respected.

The application of the criteria to a given situation requires sophistication. Such sophistication involves general understandings of colleges and universities, of the diversity of administrative roles, of the subtleties involved in superior versus modest performances, and in the nature of special cases. The sophisticated person has a sense of institutional history, traditions, even mythologies. The sophisticated person knows that strength can be weakness and vice versa, that expenditure of great energy or of long working hours may represent weakness rather than strength, and, finally, that *all human beings are flawed* and should be understood and judged as such.

Evaluation of administrators requires the application of multi-faceted criteria, the willingness to make value judgments, and the courage to put institutional values on a level with personal commitments.

V. AN EVALUATION COMMITTEE MODEL

The monograph that I prepared a year ago presents and interprets a model by which college and university boards of trustees periodically will be able to assess and evaluate key academic administrators--both presidents and others such as vice presidents and deans.

We repeat, evaluation is defined as *a process of review to assess the performance of academic administrators and to make a value judgment concerning this assessment.* Such review involves the assessment of actual performance, management activity, quality of leadership, and other activities and attributes to be delineated later.

The model for evaluation presented in the cited monograph is a modification of the *search committee* now used in colleges and universities to seek out faculty and administrators for appointment.

The modified model makes use of an *ad hoc evaluation committee.* This committee will normally have members drawn from boards of trustees (primarily used in presidential evaluations), other academic administrators, faculty, students, and alumni. This membership can be readily modified to accommodate other constituencies or to achieve a better balance, for example, for the sexes and ethnic or racial groups.

The ad hoc evaluation committee will prepare what is called an assessment portfolio. The initial item to be placed in the portfolio will be a self-evaluation statement submitted by the person under review. The portfolio will, however, consist largely of descriptive and evaluative statements representing the valid interests of the various constituencies. It also will contain a consensus statement with dissents or minority statements, if any, of the entire committee.

For the presidential review, the board of trustees will review the assessment portfolio and make its own evaluation which will be definitive.

For reviews of all other academic administrators, the president or his/her designee will review the assessment portfolio and make his/her own evaluation which will be definitive. This evaluation with the portfolio will be reviewed by the president with the administrator under review.

The board of trustees, on recommendation of the president, will determine the administrators who shall be considered academic and subject to evaluation.

It should be obvious that the review will be qualitative and judgmental. It will be based on criteria enumerated in the first section of this statement. Finally, the report will deal with any special limitations or great strengths of the administrator that appear critical to the college's or university welfare.

VI. A MODIFICATION OF THE AD HOC EVALUATION COMMITTEE MODEL

The program for review prepared for the Presidents of the the Pennsylvania State Colleges and University system has not been implemented. A partial reason is that the Secretary of Education, his deputy, and the Commissioner for Higher Education have all resigned with the year and at this time no one is insisting on implementation. Some presidents also doubted the worth of the program submitted to them.

In the Spring of 1976 a draft proposal was prepared by the presidents which included the following:

1. Restriction of an evaluation program to presidents
2. A six-year cycle of evaluation

3. "During the hiring process, 'the' conditions of employment and expectations of job performance be developed by each local board of trustees and set down in writing; or, in the case of presidents presently serving within the system, during the first year of formal review."
4. The formal evaluation should be made by a seven-member committee made up of (a) three trustees selected by the local board, (b) one member of the Board of State College and University directors, (c) two presidents, one from the state system and one from out of state, and (d) the Secretary of Education, ex officio. (It is to be noted that faculty, alumni, local administrators and students are excluded.)
5. "The board of trustees will review the committee's report and make its own evaluation which will be definitive . . . . In the event of a recommendation for noncontinuance, the president shall have the option to accept a distinguished professorship within . . . the system . . . . Such reassignment shall be preceded by a one-year period of retraining" with full salary and benefits. Should the president choose separation, "he/she shall receive a one-year period of retraining" with full salary and benefits.

VII. USE OF THE AD HOC EVALUATION COMMITTEE MODEL IN THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

The model I have described resulting from my work has been in use in the SUNY system since 1974 and at this time for presidents only. The only significant variation from the model I projected is that only one person

represents each of the four constituencies and alumni are not represented. A further modification is that a vice chancellor or equivalent officer from the central SUNY staff convenes the committee and becomes a consultant to it.

After interviewing three presidents who had been evaluated, a chairman of one committee and three central staff administrators who had considerable experience with the evaluation, I concluded that the system is effective. It is not time consuming nor has it been disruptive of normal institutional functioning. The process had not been without some "roughness" however, and there is considerable variability among the final evaluations. Presidential style is reported as a significant variable and is responsible in fair measure for variability in the evaluations.

Perhaps the most important unreconciled and unreconcilable issue is the attitude of the local boards that they should have a more dominant role in the evaluation, a claim that is also expressed by faculty. Hence, the unreconcilability!

The guide lines for the review process are straightforward. If a president does not want to stand for review and reappointment, the Chancellor of SUNY and the president discuss alternatives "including assuming or resuming full-time faculty status." One president asked to be assigned to faculty duties and was not reviewed. If a president's review results in trustee action *not* to reappoint, the president may assume or resume a faculty status. These factors seem to have been highly important in securing presidential acceptance of the review process.

There is discussion of but no move to establish a review process for other academic administrators.

VIII. A CIVIL SERVICE REVIEW MODEL

The California State Colleges and Universities system has a vice president for personnel administration on its central staff. The person who held this position for some time, now retired, has been a member fo the Federal Civil Service staff for some years. For the California system he initiated an annual management review for each campus, conducted by professionals from the central staff. From the material prepared by this management group, an evaluation is made of each president annually. The evaluation is the responsibility of the Chancellor for the system. If a decision is to be made after an evaluation, it is the Chancellor's to make.

IX. A "MANAGEMENT SCORECARD" MODEL

Peter Drucker, in an article in the *Wall Street Journal*, Friday, September 24, 1976, wrote as follows:

> It is quite likely that the boards of directors will have imposed upon them a legal duty to appraise the management of publicly held companies. The "bottom line" is not an adequate nor even an appropriate measure.

He goes on to say:

> . . . the "bottom line" is not . . . an appropriate measure of management performance . . . . The bottom line measures business performance rather than management performance. And the performance of a business today is largely the result of the performance, or lack of it, of earlier managements of past years.
>
> Performance of management . . . means . . . doing a good job in preparing today's business for the future . . . .

Drucker then presents four areas of management in which appraisal with a high probability of validity and/or reliability he believes to be possible. They are: (1) performance in appropriating capital, (2) performance on people decisions, (3) innovation performance, and (4) planning performance.

It would seem reasonable that some adaptation of these categories could be made for the evaluation of academic administrators. For example, Categories 2, 3, and 4 might be adapted for the evaluation of college deans. Other performance areas that might be considered for evaluation of academic administrators might include performance in the integration of disparate units of a complex, performance in the resolution of conflict, and performance in winning support of constituencies such as legislators, business leaders or alumni. The procedure by which such evaluation should or might be made is not suggested in Drucker's article.

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